General Web Users Tips
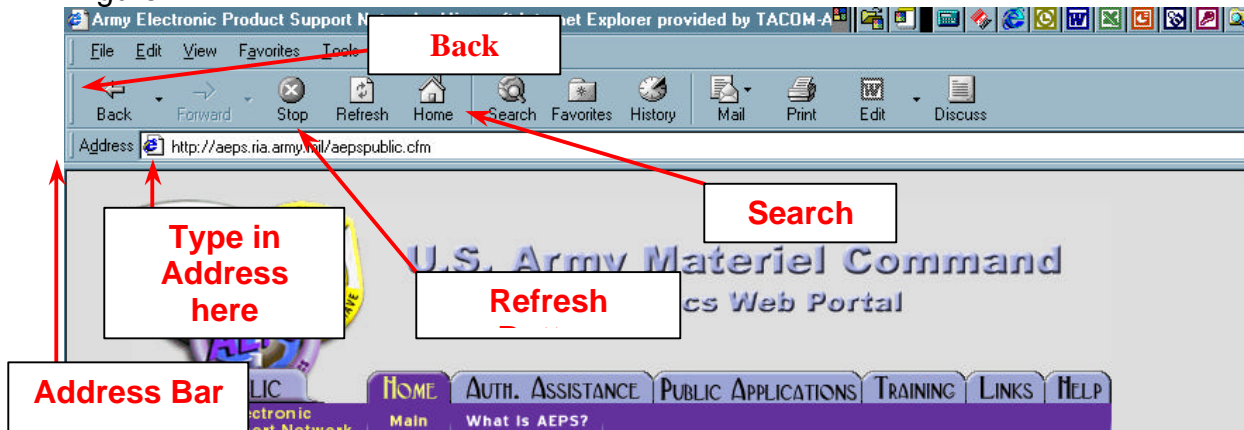
1. General Web Browser Assistance

a. Web Browsers such as Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape are used to display documents (web pages) on the World Wide Web (WWW) / Internet (or just Web) into a Geographical User Interface (GUI) format. What this means is the documents are viewed in a graphic manner that is easy on the eye and friendly to use. When using a browser, you can simply click on text or a picture and it will navigate to a new area for use. This is much easier than the original navigation to the web, where a user had to type in a series of commands from the keyboard to access information. This was not only confusing, but also extremely time consuming. With today's browsers, it is as easy to surf the web, as it is to dial the phone and order a pizza.

b. There are four important basic tools to be aware of when you first start using a Web Browser. Along with your mouse, these are the most commonly used tools in almost any site you will access. All browsers contain these basic functions for navigating, such as the "Address Bar", "Back" button, a "Refresh" button (or "Reload" button) and scroll bars. Be aware that the names will change depending on the browser of preference, but they still use the same principle. There are many other buttons and tools to choose. Experiment with them when you get a chance, and learn how the browser can speed up your navigating. But for now we are going to focus on three simple tools (Figure 1).

Figure 1

(1) Double clicking on the desktop icon opens the browser. Now you have access to the web, what do you do next? If you know the address/URL (Uniform Resource Locater) of the site you need to access, you simply type it in the address bar and then select the go button on the browser. If not, choose search, type in what you are looking for and click go. This will bring back a list of sites for you to choose
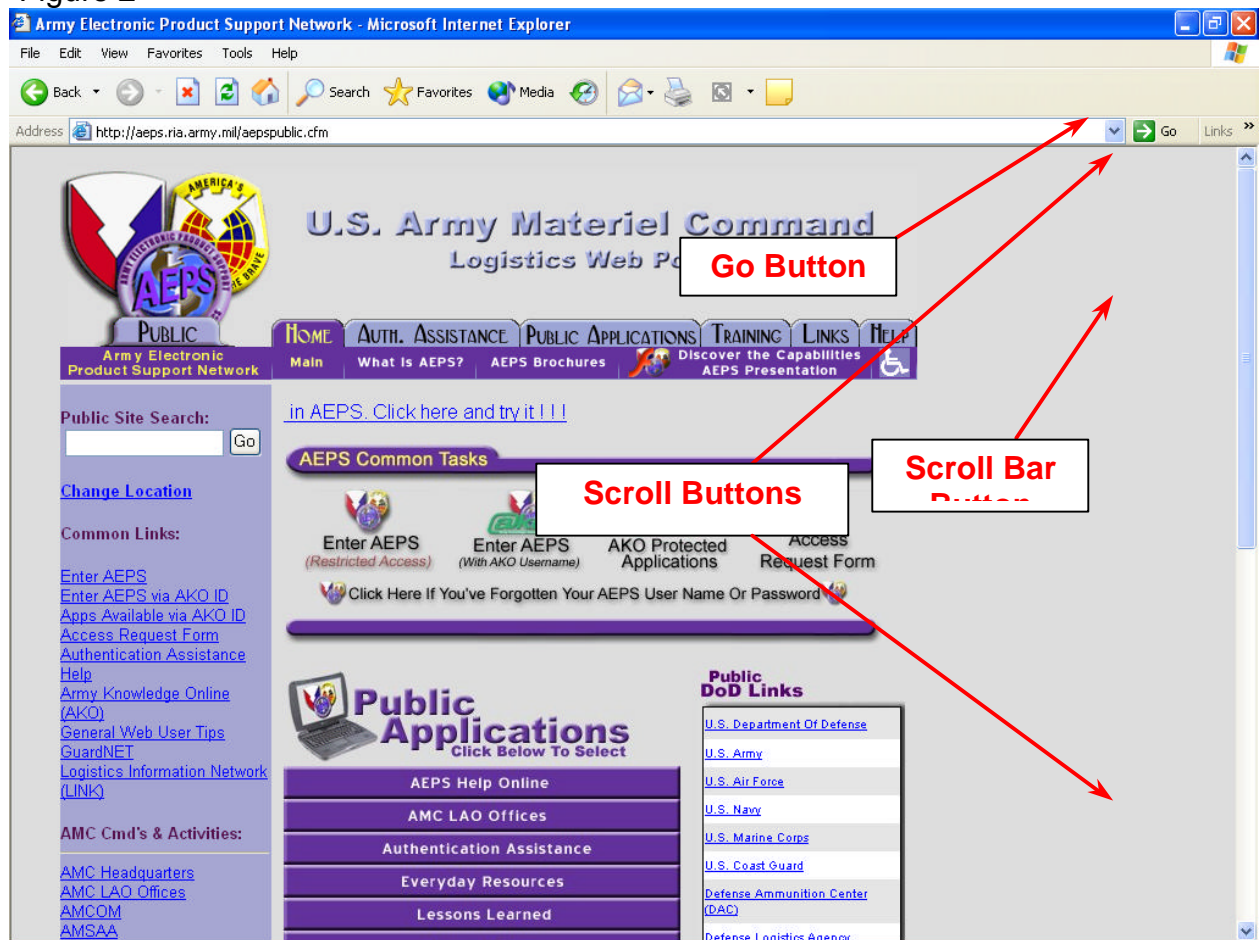
(2) Upon entering a Web Site you decide the information you were looking for does not exist on the page selected. What do you do to get back to the previous page? Easy fix! Just click on the "Back" button with your mouse, it will take you back one document so you may resume working with little delay.

(3) "Refresh" button is used when information has been changed and the page you are looking at has not, or if the Web itself has taken a hiccup and failed to load (this will happen from time to time). Don't be alarmed, just refresh. If the page fails to display again try later, it

may be down. You can also click here when you want to ensure you have the most current information to a page that has been idle for some time.

(4) Scroll bars (Figure 2) allow the user to access the full page. Often a web page is larger than what is displayed on the screen, when this happens you just click on the scroll buttons for the scroll bar to move the page up and down. You may also click and drag the scroll bar to the desired position. To do this you just hold your left mouse button while moving the mouse. The choice is yours on how to navigate; the browser just provides the tools needed.
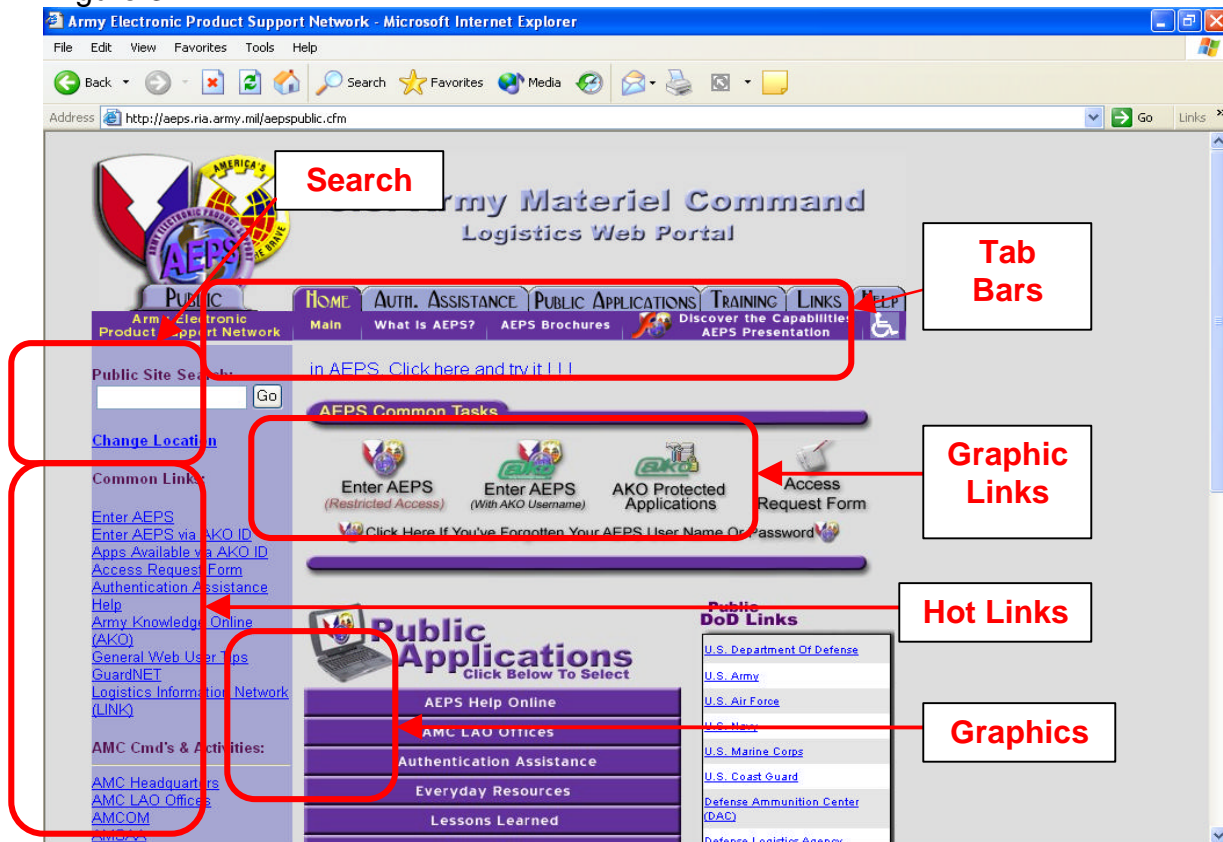
Figure 2

2. AEPS Navigation

a. Navigating through any Web Site for a new user can be confusing to say the least. With this document, we shall attempt to take the edge off the confusion and provide a few helpful tips to make the AEPS experience a productive visit. As with any web page, the AEPS site contains hotlinks, tabs, search engines, graphics and streaming videos. What do all these mean?

(1) Graphics are pictures. On the web pages of today, graphics are used extensively to add variety to the web surfing experience. AEPS has incorporated several graphics to enhance the site and display logos for the relevant commands.

(2) "Hotlinks" or "links" are text or graphics that allow users to place the pointer of the mouse over top of the selection and, by depressing the mouse button, will navigate to another page either within the site or to another website altogether. On most standard web pages the text is highlighted in some manner and when the mouse is positioned on a link, the pointer changes to a hand with a pointing finger that represents the hotlink is active. If you are not sure if a graphic or text is a hotlink, just slide the pointer over the top of the element and look for the change.

(3) A Tab Bar is similar to the tabs used on file folders. They are placed along the top of the AEPS page (Figure 3) and contain information about a subject. Once activated, the display area of the page will change to show the information for the subject chosen, just as if you pull a file from the cabinet and open it. To do this, move the mouse pointer over the top of the tab you want to select, and then click the mouse button to select.
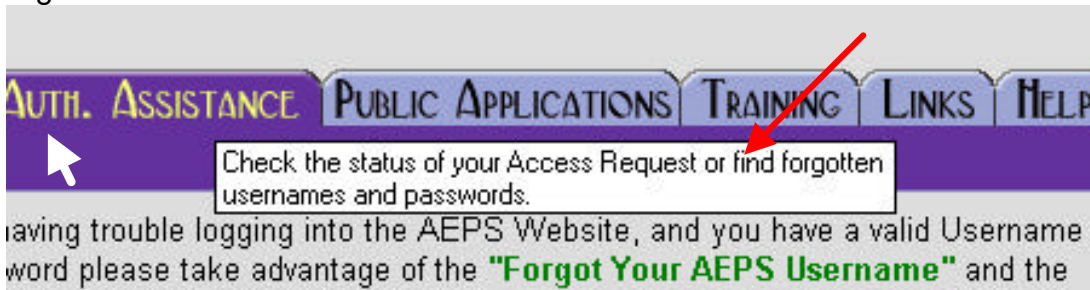
Figure 3

b. Streaming video is used on the AEPS Site to aid in the navigation and instruction process. These videos are used to explain the purpose of AEPS, and as tutorials to show proper use of the web site. These videos are an excellent format to show proper navigation to the information, you as the user will need. A streaming video is simply a small movie clip that is electronically transferred and viewed on the pc. Streaming technology allows you to watch the video while it is downloading. In order to watch the clip you may be instructed to download a version of Real Player Software and install it. This is the interface the computer uses to decipher the digital signal and display it for viewing. The download is free. All you have to do is follow the link and you will soon be watching the movie clips on your desktop.

c. Mouse navigation can provide help. Notice when the mouse is placed over top of a hot link, a balloon appears with information. This is known as "Tip Help" or a "Mouse Over". The
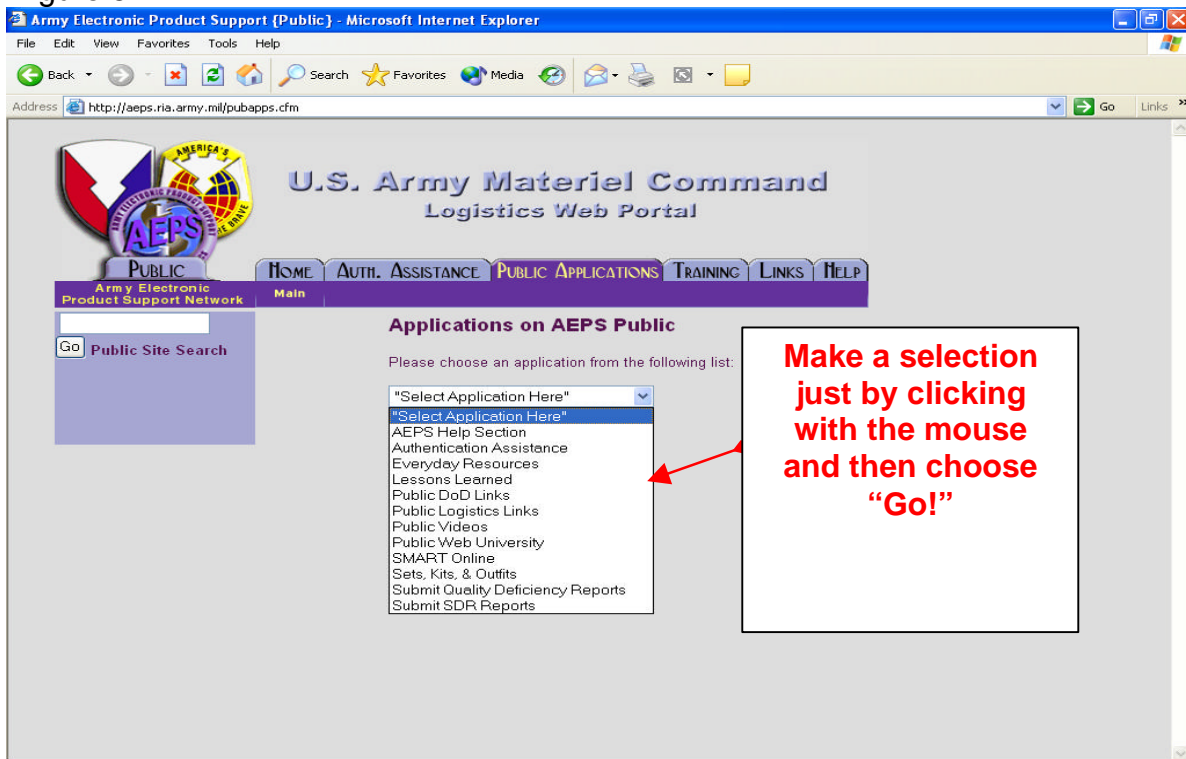
tip help can display information about the path of the link, or a description about the use. This is only informational but extremely helpful to the user. This is illustrated in Figure 4 with a red arrow.

Figure 4

d. While you are using the AEPS Site, another helpful tip for navigating is the use of "Drop Down Boxes", "Combination Boxes" or "Pick Boxes", all of these names describe the same thing. The pick boxes are used throughout AEPS in many different locations. Some are within applications and some are on AEPS Web pages. To activate a pick box you click on the triangle to the right of the text. This will expand a menu of choices to pick from, as seen in Figure 5. Make your selection and click "Go!" it will take you to the desired location.

Figure 5

Throughout the AEPS Site there are a number of resources to assist you with further navigation and help related issues. Do not be shy; these resources were placed there for you, the user, to make a user friendly and productive environment which to work in. Now that you know what avenues are used to navigate, navigating through AEPS is just a click away.